

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 005305

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, EUR/PPD, PA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: 9/11 EVENTS IN ANKARA, ISTANBUL GENERATE POSITIVE PRESS PLAY

-----  
CHARGE, CG LEAD 9/11 COMMEMORATIONS  
-----

1. Commemorations organized by Embassy Ankara and Congen Istanbul to mark the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks generated unusually widespread and positive coverage in the Turkish media today. Embassy Ankara organized a ceremony and wreath-laying at a monument to Turkish martyrs in the nearby municipality of Kecioren. Turkish participants included local military commanders, the mayor of Kecioren, and representatives of Turkish martyrs' organizations. The Charge's comments highlighting the US and Turkey's common struggle against terrorism and emphasizing Turkey's suffering from PKK violence resulted in numerous front-page stories and prominent television coverage. Headlines noted especially the Charge's remark equating Usama bin-Ladin with imprisoned PKK terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan, and her reiteration of US determination to cooperate with Turkey against the PKK. In Istanbul, the Consul General and PAO laid wreaths at the four sites of the al-Qaida bombings in Istanbul in November 2003. Comprehensive coverage of the ceremonies and the CG's remarks appeared repeatedly on 24-hour news channel NTV and in "Posta," Turkey's largest-circulation daily. The paper highlighted the CG's characterization of terrorism as a threat to free people everywhere.

-----  
"BIN-LADIN IS NO DIFFERENT FROM OCALAN"  
-----

2. Coverage of the Ankara commemoration ceremony in the influential Turkish daily "Milliyet" was typical of the overall tone in the media:

"US Embassy Charge d'Affaires Nancy McEldowney made an important gesture and delivered a critical message following the visit of US generals to discuss the PKK presence in northern Iraq. On the fourth anniversary of the September 11 attacks in the United States, McEldowney laid a wreath at a monument to Turkish martyrs who have fallen in the struggle against the PKK. Beginning her remarks in Turkish, McEldowney said "today I want to speak to you from my heart, because I am here today as a true friend of Turkey and the Turkish people. September 11 was such a tragedy that it still burns in our hearts. But on this painful day, we are not thinking only of ourselves, because many others have suffered as well, even more than we have." McEldowney then placed Usama bin-Ladin, who has drowned the world in blood, in the same category as the terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Noting that Turkey has suffered for decades at the hands of "this murderous gang," McEldowney stressed that "Turkey has paid a terrible price in blood and lives to protect the republic that it holds dear." She added that "the Turkish people have borne an extraordinary burden in this regard." The US diplomat continued: "I stand together with your nation, which has felt the pain of the martyrs. There can be no double standard and no distinction in our words or our actions. Whether the bomb goes off in New York or Istanbul, whether it is Zarkawi or Murat Karayilan, by standing together at this monument today we send a clear message. Americans stand together with their Turkish brothers in condemning the PKK and its terrorist violence just as we condemn al-Qaida."

The coverage in "Milliyet" and most other papers featured a series of photos (including many on the front page) of the Charge, accompanied by the head of ODC, with Turkish civilian and military officials. Turkish TV news channels NTV and CNN-Turk ran excerpts of the ceremony repeatedly last night and this morning, and other popular commercial stations featured the event prominently on last night's main news programs.

-----  
"CALL FOR A JOINT STRUGGLE AGAINST TERROR"  
-----

3. Media coverage of the commemoration ceremonies organized by ConGen Istanbul was also very positive. At the

Consulate's invitation, a television crew from NTV and the foreign news editor from "Posta," Turkey's largest circulation daily, accompanied the CG and the PAO to the four locations of the 2003 bombings. NTV gave extensive coverage to each wreath-laying and to the remarks by Consul General Jones. A half-page article in "Posta" featured photos of our commemorative delegation with British diplomats who met the CG at the British consulate, and of representatives of Istanbul's Jewish community at each of the synagogues that was targeted in the attacks.

14. "Posta" excerpted heavily from the CG's remarks in a detailed account of the wreath-laying ceremonies:

"When I asked the Consul General why she had decided to remember the events of 9/11 in this way, and what message she wished to send, she answered like this: "Terrorism represents a threat to free people everywhere. It knows no boundaries. The Turkish people understand better than most the pain that results from terrorist attacks, the damage that is done, and the destructive effects of terrorism on society. Today, on the anniversary of September 11, Americans remember the terrorist attacks that took place on their soil. But September 11 doesn't belong only to Americans. We must also remember all Turks who have been victims of this extremist violence. Today we are laying wreaths at the sites of the four horrible bombings that took place in Istanbul in November 2003. No one should excuse terrorism in the name of ideology. Our societies must stand firm around our shared values of tolerance, respect, and understanding, and all of us must stand together against terror."

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

15. The Mission's 9/11 commemorations were an effort to connect the al-Qaida attacks in the United States with Turkey's own troubled history with terrorism, and to reaffirm our determination to act jointly in the struggle against both al-Qaida and the PKK. The message - no double standard on terrorism - played well and extensively in the Turkish media, and marked another step in Mission efforts to assure the Turkish public that the US is firmly on Turkey's side against the PKK.  
End Comment.

MCELDOWNEY